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Report of the Committee on Experiment Stations Exhibits at the Chicago Exposition of 1933

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 19, 1931.

A meeting of the Committee on Experiment Stations Exhibits at the Chicago Exposition of 1933 was held at the Stevens Hotel, Chicago, November 15, with Dr. A.F. Woods, Director of Scientific Work of the Department of Agriculture, acting as chairman, and with Directors Call of Kansas, Gardner of Michigan, Johnson of Washington, Lipman of New Jersey, Mumford of Illinois, and Winters of North Carolina in attendance.

In discussing the plan of the exhibit the Committee was unanimous in the opinion that representatives of the experiment stations and the Department of Agriculture should cooperate in bringing about a joint, unified and coordinated exhibit and made a recommendation to that effect. A plan which had been under advisement to make a separate experiment stations exhibit with the material grouped by subjects and with this as a part of the Department's display on space allotted to the Office of Experiment Stations was not considered as sufficiently effective in promoting the object sought and desired, namely, to illustrate the concerted action of the experiment stations and the Department for the improvement of American agriculture by means of research and investigation. It was pointed out in the discussion that by linking the experiment stations' contributions with the Department's material it could be shown to better advantage what had been accomplished in any particular line, such as the improvement of different crops -- wheat, corn, cotton, and the like, the control of plant and animal diseases, and in all other fields of activity, and that at the same time it would call attention to the part taken by the stations and the Department in bringing about results.

It was felt, furthermore, that as much of the work is conducted cooperatively by the two agricultural research agencies the coordination of the exhibit material would be readily achieved and would even follow naturally and logically. The opportunity and possibility of several stations contributing material showing how regional problems are attacked or have been solved and how results distribute themselves in such areas also was discussed. Attention was called to the fact that by this plan the work on any particular subject is brought together in one place or in one exhibit whereas other means of display would tend to distribute and to disconnect it, to the confusion of the visitor. Provision of an adequate system of signs and labels to bring out clearly the exact status of the exhibit was proposed and concurred in by all present. The Committee unanimously voiced the opinion that all contributions should be made with a view to showing what science has done for agriculture.

To promote this plan of the exhibit it was understood that Dr. A.F. Woods would appoint a committee of station officials, the members representing different subject specialists, who would confer with corresponding bureaus, offices or services of the Department in arranging for the exhibit, and that the Office of Experiment Stations give as much assistance as possible in furthering the enterprise and attaining the object.

Under the arrangement proposed the Office of Experiment Stations will include in its exhibit material of general information concerning the experiment stations, such as historical and statistical data, a large map showing the distribution of the experiment stations of the United States and, possibly, also of the world. This is just a general statement, as no definite plans have been laid down.

Dr. Woods explained to the Committee that only under a cooperative arrangement of this kind the Federal exposition funds would be available for the purpose. The bill before Congress at the last session authorized the receipt from any source of contributions of material, or the borrowing of material or exhibits, to aid in carrying out the general purpose of the Act and then stated that the necessary expenditures in such connection must be accounted for in the same manner as any appropriation that might be made under the authority of the exposition bill. There is little question that the coming bill will include these same provisions; but what the appropriation will be no one can tell. The old bill called for a total of \$1,725,000 for the Government participation.

Dr. Woods stated further that in anticipation of the passage of that bill a tentative allotment of funds and space to the different Government departments was made; but that at this time the passage of a new bill by the coming Congress must be awaited before definite steps in any direction can be taken. He stressed the importance of doing as much preliminary and preparatory work as can be done to be ready to proceed without loss of time as soon as we walk on solid ground.

Guided by the wording of the old bill and by precedents, Dr. Woods was of the opinion that the Federal exposition funds would take care of the assembling, transportation, labelling and installation of the material, the care and maintenance of the exhibit, and the return of the stations' contributions. He stated further that the space for the exhibit would be free.

In discussing the question of State exhibits Dr. Woods made it clear that these would be entirely separate from this experiment stations and Department undertaking, and that the chances of duplication were so slight that they might be disregarded.

J. I. Schulte of the Office of Experiment Stations, who also attended this meeting of the Committee, was instructed to prepare and to present this report which was read before the Subsection on Experiment Station Work of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Tuesday, November 17.

Director F. J. Sievers of the Massachusetts Station, Chairman of the Subsection, requested that this report be sent out immediately to all the experiment station directors.